

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 and 13-16 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 5 are amended; and Claims 15 and 16 are newly added by the present amendment. Support for the new and amended claims can be found in the original specification, claims and drawings.¹ No new matter is presented.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-8 and 13-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Rauschnabel et al. (WO 99/63129, herein Rauschnabel), citations from U.S. Pat. 6,613,393, in view of Ichihara et al. (U.S. Pat. 4,782,477, herein Ichihara).

In response to the rejections noted above, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent Claims 1 and 5 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious over the applied references.

Amended independent Claim 1 recites, in part, a sputtering apparatus, wherein:

... the first film deposition area includes a first sputtering source comprising a first cathode and a first target held on the first cathode and a first plasma generator located so as to be adjacent to the first sputtering source,
the second film deposition area includes a second sputtering source comprising a second cathode and a second target held on the second cathode and a second plasma generator located so as to be adjacent to the second sputtering source,
the first sputtering source and the first plasma generator are partitioned from each other ***and a first exhaust port and a second exhaust port are provided on each side of the partition***, and the second sputtering source and the second plasma generator are partitioned from each other ***and a third exhaust port and a fourth exhaust port are provided on each side of the partition...***

Independent Claim 5, while directed to an alternative embodiment, is amended to recite similar features. Accordingly, the remarks and arguments presented below are applicable to each of amended independent Claims 1 and 5.

¹ E.g., specification at least at Figs. 1-2.

As depicted in an exemplary embodiments at Figs. 1 and 2, the sputtering apparatus includes an exhaust port on each side of the partitions separating the sputtering sources and the plasma generators.

In rejecting the features directed to the exhaust port configuration, as previously recited in Claim 5, the Office Action admits that Rauschnabel fails to disclose the placement of exhaust ports in his system, whatsoever. In an attempt to remedy this deficiency, the Office Action relies on Ichihara and asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to “use the location of the vacuum pump system of Ichihara” in Rauschnabel, since Rauschnabel fails to specify a location of an exhaust system. Applicant, however, respectfully submits that the exhaust port configuration recited in amended Claims 1 and 5 is neither taught nor rendered obvious by Ichihara.

Fig. 4 of Ichihara describes a plasma polymerization apparatus used to form a fluoroethylene adhesive layer on a recording medium. Col. 7, ll. 21-38, for example, of Ichihara describes that the plasma polymerization apparatus includes a single exhaust unit 70, which is used to evacuate the polymerization chamber. Thus, as depicted in Fig. 4, Ichihara describes the use of a single exhaust port and a single air exhaust unit 70 to evacuate a chamber, and fails to even remotely relate to the configuration recited in independent Claims 1 and 5.

More specifically, Ichihara fails to teach or suggest a configuration in which “[a] first sputtering source and [a] first plasma generator are partitioned from each other ***and a first exhaust port and a second exhaust port are provided on each side of the partition,*** and [a] second sputtering source and [a] second plasma generator are partitioned from each other ***and a third exhaust port and a fourth exhaust port are provided on each side of the partition,***” as recited in independent Claims 1 and 5.

Therefore, even if the combination of Rauschnabel and Ichihara is considered proper, the combination fails to teach or suggest the above noted features recited in amended independent Claims 1 and 5.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 1 and 5 (and Claims 2-4, 5-8, and 13-14, which depend therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

Further, new Claims 15 and 16 are newly added by the present amendment. Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are patentable over the applied references at least by virtue of their dependency from independent Claims 1 and 5. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 15 and 16 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied references.

For example, dependent Claim 15 recites that the sputtering apparatus further comprises:

a fifth exhaust port provided on a first side wall of the vacuum chamber between the first and second film deposition areas; and
a sixth exhaust port provided on a second side wall of the vacuum chamber between the first and second film deposition areas.

Claim 16, while depending from Claim 5, recites similar features. As depicted in an exemplary embodiment at Fig. 1, exhaust ports (e.g., 83 and 84) are located on side walls of the vacuum chambers between the first and second film deposition areas.

As noted above, Ichihara describes the use of a single exhaust port and a single air exhaust unit 70 to evacuate a chamber, and fails to teach or suggest the above noted features recited in dependent Claims 15 and 16.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that new dependent Claims 15 and 16 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied references.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-8 and 13-16 is patentably distinguishing over the applied references. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of the application is therefore requested.

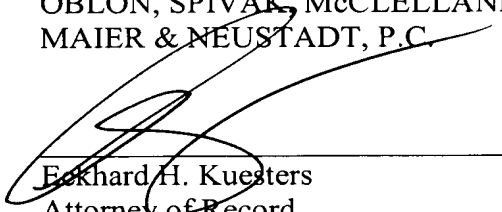
Respectfully submitted,

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